

Seven-day Week Lunch Menu Planning Checklist for Grades K-8 Option: School Year 2023-24

This checklist assists school food authorities (SFAs) with planning meals to meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#) meal pattern. For an overview of the NSLP meal pattern requirements, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) resource, [Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the NSLP](#). For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages.

Instructions: Check (☑) “yes” or “no” to indicate if the lunch menu complies with each requirement.

| Lunch | Yes | No ¹ |
|--|-----|-----------------|
| Each lunch includes the five components: meat/meat alternates, grains, fruits, vegetables, and milk. | | |
| Milk Component | Yes | No ¹ |
| Each lunch includes 1 cup of milk. ² | | |
| The weekly lunch menu includes 7 cups of milk. ² | | |
| Milk is unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free. | | |
| At least two different varieties of milk are offered, including at least one unflavored choice. | | |
| Fruits Component | Yes | No ¹ |
| Each lunch includes ½ cup of fruit. ² | | |
| The weekly lunch menu includes 3½ cups of fruit. ² | | |
| Fruit juice is 100 percent juice and does not exceed half (1¾ cups) of the weekly fruits component. <i>Indicate “NA” (not applicable) if the menu does not include fruit juice.</i> | | |
| Dried fruit is credited as twice the amount served, i.e., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. | | |
| Vegetables Component | Yes | No ¹ |
| Each meal includes ¾ cup of vegetables. ² | | |
| The weekly lunch menu includes 5¼ cups of vegetables. ² | | |
| The weekly lunch menu provides all 5vegetable subgroups (5¼ cups total): | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dark green: ½ cup dark offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Red/orange: ¾ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Beans and peas (legumes): ½ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Starchy: ½ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ½ cup offered weekly (or dark green, red/orange, beans/peas, or starchy) <input type="checkbox"/> 2½ cups of additional vegetables offered weekly (from any of the five vegetable subgroups) | | |
| Vegetable juice is 100 percent juice and does not exceed half (2⅝ cups) of the weekly vegetables component. <i>Indicate “NA” if the menu does not include vegetable juice.</i> | | |
| Raw leafy greens are credited as half of the amount served, i.e., 1 cup of lettuce or spinach credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. | | |

| Grains Component | Yes | No ¹ |
|--|-----|-----------------|
| Each lunch includes 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of grains. ² | | |
| The weekly lunch menu includes 11-12½ oz eq of grains. ² | | |
| At least 80 percent of grains offered during the week are whole grain-rich (WGR). The remaining grains are enriched. For information, on the WGR criteria refer to the CSDE’s guide, Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 . | | |
| Grain-based desserts do not exceed 2 oz eq per week. | | |
| Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component | Yes | No ¹ |
| Each lunch includes 1 oz eq of MMA. ² | | |
| The weekly lunch menu includes 12½-14 oz eq of MMA. ² | | |
| The MMA is served in a main dish, or a main dish and one other item. | | |
| Offer versus Serve (OVS) | Yes | No ¹ |
| <i>Indicate “NA” if the school does not implement OVS.</i> | | |
| Students select at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable for a reimbursable meal. | | |
| In addition to at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable, students select the full portion of at least two other components for a reimbursable meal. | | |
| Dietary Specifications (Nutrient Standards) for Weekly Menus ³ | Yes | No ¹ |
| <i>Indicate “NK” (not known) if the SFA does not conduct a nutrient analysis.</i> | | |
| Calories are within the allowable range of 600-650 calories. | | |
| Saturated fat is less than 10 percent of total calories. | | |
| Sodium does not exceed 1,110 milligrams (target 1A). | | |
| All nutrition labels and manufacturer specifications indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | |

¹ If the answer to any statement is “no,” the lunch menu does not comply with the meal pattern requirements. Check the menu and revise accordingly.

² SFAs may serve larger amounts of milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates if the lunch menu does not exceed the weekly dietary specifications (limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium).

³ SFAs are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis of menus. If applicable, the CSDE will conduct a nutrient analysis during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

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Menu Planning Resources

Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Offer versus Serve for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Offer-versus-Serve-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Resources for the School Meal Patterns: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/Resources_School_Meal_Patterns.pdf

Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Vegetable_Subgroups_NSLP.pdf



For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals* and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/NSLP_Menu_Checklist_7day_grades_K-8_option.pdf.

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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